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Having Her Own Smoke

Employment and Independence for
Singlewomen in Germany, 1400–1750

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SCHOLARLY INTEREST IN SINGLEWOMEN in the medieval period has a very long history in Germany. In the late nineteenth century, when social commentators and academics throughout Europe (and the United States) were debating what to do with "surplus" and "redundant" women who were not able to marry, the German archivist and historian Karl Bücher looked backward to see if this had been a problem before. Using several population counts from the fifteenth century, he determined that there had been a significant "surplus of women" (*Frauenüberschuß*) in German cities during that time, perhaps as much as 125 women for every 100 men.¹ How did these women survive? By their own work, answered Bücher, who paid special attention to female occupations in his later exhaustive study of occupations in Frankfurt, and who, along with other nineteenth-century historians, saw the craft guilds in the late Middle Ages as a primary employer of women, including those not the wives or widows of guild masters.²

Bücher's statistics about the sex ratio in medieval cities have now been thoroughly questioned, as he used numbers drawn from wartime (when young men often fled cities to avoid being drafted into military service) or from only parts of cities.³ Subsequent studies have also demonstrated, however, that even in cities with a balanced sex ratio, many households were headed by women. In Frankfurt, in 1354, for example, 17 percent of the households paying taxes were headed by women, and 24 percent in 1495; similar statistics — 25 percent in Trier in 1363, 22 percent in Schwäbisch-Hall in 1406, 25 percent in Basel in 1429 — come from the tax records of other cities.⁴

These tax records do not invariably divide female heads of household into widows and singlewomen, but occasionally they allow for rough estimates. Among the nearly 300 households headed by women in Trier that paid the least amount of taxes (and female-headed households were always overrepresented among the poorest in any city), 26 percent were headed by women labeled widows, 9 percent by beguines, 21 percent by women with an occupational designation, and 44 percent by women simply identified by name.⁵ Some in the last group may well have been widows, and a few women with an occupational designation may have been widows as well — perhaps those whose husbands were long dead and who were known in the neighborhood for their work — but we can probably assume that most of the women with an occupational designation and some in the last group were singlewomen. Thus whether women actually outnumbered men in total, women did work and live independently in medieval cities; included among them were a significant share of singlewomen who lived independently, or in the words of the period, who "had their own smoke."

Statistical studies have also revealed that, in contrast to what Bücher wished had been the case, the sixteenth century brought little change in this situation.⁶ Tax records from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries indicate that female-headed households continued to make up between one-fifth and one-quarter of the tax-paying households in most cities, and a few enumerations distinguish between singlewomen and widows. In Stuttgart in 1545, for example, a special tax levied to support military moves against the Turks (*Türkensteuer*) listed 3.5 percent of the households in the city as headed by women who were probably single (and another 11 percent by women labeled widow).⁷ Tax lists from Frankfurt in 1593 and 1607 give similar numbers, as do those of Augsburg around 1600.⁸ Tax records in villages do not begin as early as those in cities, but when they do they again reveal singlewomen as heads of household; during the eighteenth century in Egg, for example, a village of several hundred households in the south German area of the Vorarlberg, between 2 and 6 percent of the households were headed by singlewomen, with another 8 to 21 percent of the households made up of unmarried brothers and sisters who lived together.⁹ These numbers may seem low by contemporary standards, but, as we shall see, legal and ideological sanctions on singlewomen living alone or heading households were so strong that even percentages in the single digits are surprising.

New and more extensive types of sources that began in the sixteenth century allow us to get a better idea about numbers of singlewomen. Mar-

riage registers indicate that women's age of marriage was late, with the average age for women at first marriage in many villages of between 25 and 28, and in cities of between 21 and 25; in both rural and urban areas until the late eighteenth century, daughters from wealthier families married earlier than those from poorer families, who might not marry until they were in their forties.¹⁰ Marriage registers thus suggest that some female-headed households were those of women who were not yet married but who would eventually marry. By the early eighteenth century church records of all types are complete enough to allow some calculation of the percentage of those who never married among the population; most estimates put this at about 10 percent.¹¹

In addition to singlewomen who lived independently and thus show up in tax records as heads of household, many also lived as dependent domestic servants, of which there are increasingly specific enumerations in the early modern period. These records show that female domestic servants often made up between 5 and 15 percent of the population of urban areas, and that the majority of these were singlewomen.¹²

All these records indicate that Bücher's question may well be asked about early modern as well as medieval Germany, and it forms the key focus for this essay. What employment options were open to and pursued by singlewomen, and how did these change during the centuries in which so much about German society and culture changed dramatically?

Historiographical Issues

Though I have been using the terms "Germany" and "singlewomen" rather freely, it is important to recognize before going any further that both of these are somewhat problematic. There was, of course, no Germany in this period, only a loose conglomeration of hundreds of states making up the Holy Roman Empire, each with its own laws and traditions, and many including territory no longer within the boundaries of Germany. Though many of these states had roughly similar legal codes — and the smaller states often intentionally copied their larger and more powerful neighbors — there was often enough difference to mean that the laws regarding singlewomen could differ dramatically from place to place. We know that legal differences shaped employment and migration for single men, as the laws of certain cities favored journeymen at the expense of masters. These legal differences have been studied less systematically for women, but we do

know that cities differed dramatically in the proportion of female to male servants, so that women may also have been influenced by legal differences as they migrated in search of work, choosing to go to those cities which offered more freedom as well as more employment opportunities. Thus, along with the types of personal and economic factors that made the experiences of singlewomen so varied in other parts of Europe — age, social class, ethnicity, regional economic development — the lack of legal uniformity in Germany makes generalizations difficult; even the geographic boundaries of "Germany" are hard to define.

"Singlewomen" also has rather loose boundaries. As noted above, the sources are not always clear about a woman's marital status, a problem exacerbated by the fact that most female-headed households are among the poorest in the city, often too poor to pay any taxes, so that officials do not record information about them carefully.¹³ Poor widows and singlewomen often clustered in certain areas of town where rents were lowest, so that place of residence does not help us distinguish between the two groups.

There was also not a perfectly sharp line between being married and being single. Though the Catholic Church had taken a strong stand against clerical concubinage, in many cities and rural parishes priests still had concubines into the sixteenth century; these women were technically not wives, of course, but may have lived with the priest for many years.¹⁴ Women who were vagrants or migrants often had longstanding relationships with men — again not technically "marriage" — and the children that resulted from these unions shaped the women's chances of employment and thus made their situation different from that of migrants without children.¹⁵ At the other end of the social scale, noble and wealthy women sometimes spent much of their lives in conventlike institutions, termed *Stifte*, where they took no vows and so were not technically religious, but never married or did not marry until much later in life than most women of their social class.¹⁶ In some parts of Germany this included Protestant women, who were forced to defend their single state to religious authorities who denied the value of celibacy; their words are some of the few we have from Protestant women about the value of virginity.¹⁷

Both Protestant and Catholic religious authorities and secular governments attempted to make the line separating the married from the single much sharper in the sixteenth century, however. Along with criticizing celibacy, Protestants attacked the Catholic understanding that consent of the two parties was the only necessary element in a marriage, pointing to irregular "marriages" (literally "dark-corner marriages," *Winkelheben*) in

taverns and inns that were followed by pregnancy and then disputed by the "husband."¹⁷ Though they denied the sacramentality of marriage, Protestants put great emphasis on parental consent, a public ceremony, and the presence of a pastor for a valid marriage.¹⁸ Reforming Catholics answered with the decree *Tametsi* at the Council of Trent, which required the presence of witnesses, including a parish priest, for an exchange of vows to be considered a valid marriage.¹⁹ By the later sixteenth century both sides in the religious struggle saw setting clear boundaries between married and single, and other aspects of marital reform, as key parts of their drives toward confessionalization and social discipline; both Protestants and Catholics strengthened clerical, paternal, and state control of marriage.²⁰

Attitudes Toward Single People

Along with a sharper distinction between married and single, the sixteenth century also brought with it a greater emphasis on marriage as the proper life for all (or most) individuals. This emphasis has traditionally been attributed to the Protestant Reformation, though recent scholarship has noted that decades before the Reformation Christian humanists also praised marriage, and city authorities viewed the marital household as the key political and economic unit. After the Reformation as well, manuals advising men how to be firm-yet-kindly household heads and women obedient-yet-capable wives flowed from both Protestant and Catholic pens.²¹ Though their message was thus not completely new or different, Protestant reformers were particularly strong in both promoting marriage and attacking single people, arguing that those who did not marry went against God's command in the Garden of Eden and their divinely created and irresistible sexual desire; women who did not marry, they argued, also lacked the care and discipline the marital state provided.²² With both religious and political ideology so firmly in favor of marriage, people who never married were regarded with increasing suspicion, except for those in Catholic areas clearly attached to religious institutions that themselves were becoming more like households during this period.²³

Single men were often the targets of preachers and moralists for their flamboyant clothing and rowdy behavior, but the craft guilds depended on their labor as journeymen and apprentices and so were loath to support any meaningful restrictions, which would have simply led young men to migrate elsewhere.²⁴ Singlewomen were a different matter, for their work was

rarely recognized as essential. Hostility toward never-married persons and a suspicion about women who were not under the control of men were not simply a matter of pastoral concern or religious ideology, but led to explicit legal restrictions on women's choice of work, place of residence, free-time activities, and even relations with their own family.

Some of these laws were directed primarily against women who migrated in search of employment, and are part of more general fear of migrants and transients.²⁵ Singlewomen were forbidden to move into cities unless they went into service, and those who left employers were banished. Innkeepers were prohibited from housing unattached women unless they received special permission, employment agents allowed to house domestic servants between jobs for only very short periods of time, and private citizens ordered never to take in singlewomen.²⁶ Such restrictions were gradually expanded to include the daughters of citizens, however, as they, along with foreigners, were forbidden to "have their own smoke" ("ihr eigene Rauch haben") or "earn their own bread" ("ihr eigene Brot verdienen").²⁷ Even girls whose mothers were still alive were suspect, as this ordinance from Strasbourg in 1665 makes clear:

Numerous complaints have been made that some widows living here have two, three, or more daughters living with them at their expense. These girls go into service during the winter but during the summer return to their mothers, partly because they want to wear more expensive clothes than servants are normally allowed to and partly because they want to have more freedom to walk around, to saunter back and forth whenever they want to. It is our experience that this causes nothing but shame, immodesty, wantonness and immorality, so that a watchful eye should be kept on this, and if it is discovered, the parents as well as the daughters should be punished with a fine, a jail sentence, or even banishment from the city in order to serve as an example to others.²⁸

Worries about women working and living on their own became particularly acute, as one would expect, in areas in which some type of wage labor made this possible. Textile production was the most common form of wage labor for women in Germany, and though spinners, weavers, and lace-makers were usually badly paid, local market conditions sometimes allowed them to make a living wage. It is thus in centers of textile production, such as Augsburg in the sixteenth century, Württemberg in the seventeenth, or Berlin in the eighteenth, that we find the most heated debates about women living on their own.

In 1577 in Augsburg the weavers' guild complained to the city council that they could not find enough young women willing to work as spin-

maids in their households, as all the women coming into the city were working independently and living with other families or renting a small room somewhere. The weavers thus had to buy their thread from them at what they regarded as inflated costs. The city council responded by forbidding all noncitizen women to live and work independently, but the prohibition proved impossible to enforce as the need for thread was too great. In 1597 the weavers were even more incensed, as women were saying openly that they were not so dumb as to work as spin-maids for the weavers when they could earn three times as much spinning on their own; even those who agreed to live in weavers' households demanded the right to work for themselves two days a week. This situation was intolerable, according to the weavers, who included all sorts of moral issues in their complaint: the women had complete freedom as to when they worked and when not and so walked around with journeymen at all hours; they were a bad example for girls coming in from the countryside and even for local girls who would thus be inclined to live on their own rather than in a weaver's household. The council enacted a series of harsh ordinances banishing all women who made demands of their employers or worked on their own and all employers who made contracts with them, but these were also largely ineffectual, for unmarried citizen women continue to appear in the records as the employers of migrant women, all providing thread for the disgruntled but dependent weavers.²⁹

In seventeenth-century Württemberg, a special pejorative, *Eigenbrötlerinnen* (women who earn their own bread), was used for women who lived on their own, and citizens were enjoined to report to authorities those who housed them. Tight control was exercised to make sure they did absolutely nothing else but spin (in other words, no other part of the cloth production process), with dual authorities fining both village and city residents who employed singlewomen at other tasks and imposing a maximum piece rate for spinners, thus keeping their wages low.³⁰

Similar anger at women who lived on their own and those who facilitated this arrangement also comes out in an eighteenth-century treatise by Johann Georg Krünitz, the author of a 242-volume political and economic encyclopedia:

The shortage of native domestic servants partly results when servants, especially maids, live by their own hands with other people in little rooms and support themselves by spinning, sewing, washing, or similar things. They usually do this at times when things are cheap. Through this they show nothing except a flight from hard work and an inclination towards comfort; they would rather have small earnings if

they can only be their own masters and sit behind the stove. Yes, through this they seek to have better opportunities to indulge in their slovenly and immoral debaucheries more comfortably. The police cannot allow servants to live by their own hands in this way, but should send them away if they are not from this city, or bring them into the workhouse or jail; they should also punish with prison or something equally forceful those who shelter such servants and do not report them to the servant's office or the police-officials who have authority over servants.³¹

Krünitz's comments bring together all of the fears about singlewomen on their own: they affected the economy adversely by creating a shortage of servants so that employers had to pay servants more; they were "masterless" and thus a threat to a society that viewed male-headed households as the norm; they might be sexually active and have children out of wedlock, who would need public support. Pastor Brändle from the Vorarlberg was equally appalled at the activities of female cotton-spinners and lace-makers, who were wearing fancy clothes "because of the good wages in lace-making," ordering drinks from taverns for their lace-making sessions, and playing cards; he was especially upset at finding "a whole crowd of singlewomen" in a tavern on a Sunday.³²

Singlewomen in early modern Germany thus faced continual criticism about their marital state and often about their type of employment and their living independently. Given the economic security, legal advantages, and higher social status that marriage promised, it is not surprising that marriage was the goal of most women and men. (Studies of early modern marriage courts reveal, for example, that many more women took cases to court in order to establish a marriage than to prevent or dissolve one.)³³ Nevertheless, despite the fulminations of preachers and officials, a large number of women, as we have seen, remained unmarried for most or all of their adult lives. In this milieu in which the behavior of singlewomen was under such intense scrutiny, what possibilities were open to them? Could any of them offer the "freedom" so feared by authorities, or was this simply a chimera of official imagination?

Domestic Servants

By far the largest number of singlewomen in Germany were employed in domestic service; indeed, as in English, one of the words for singlewoman and female domestic servant was the same: *Magd* (maid). As we have seen, domestic service was the most or only acceptable form of employment for

singlewomen in the eyes of many commentators, for this generally put them into a male-headed household; population tallies indicate that most female-headed households were too poor to hire domestic servants. Conditions of service varied tremendously: many households, particularly in urban areas, had only one servant, almost always a woman who assisted in all domestic tasks and also at artisanal tasks if the household was one of a guild master; wealthier households might have many servants, and a woman could work her way up from gooselg to children's maid to serving maid to cook; in some households, such as those of weavers in Augsburg noted above, women might spend most of their time in production, so that though officially counted as "maids" they were actually, in Olwen Hufton's terms, "residential industrial employees."³⁴ No matter what their tasks, however, they were always more poorly paid than male servants; both the regulations stipulating the amount of pay for servants and records of amounts actually paid indicate that women's wages were usually about half that of men's.³⁵ This proportion varied little from the fourteenth century to the eighteenth, and applied whether the place of employment was a patrician household in a large city, a noble estate in the countryside, or an artisanal household in a small town.

Some analysts of domestic service have pointed to the fact that *most* servants were between the ages of 15 and 29, and have thus seen service as a "life-cycle" phenomenon involving young people of all social classes, a period during which they learned the domestic and craft skills necessary to run a household.³⁶ Several more detailed analyses have demonstrated, however, that urban middle-class young women did not generally go through a period of service unless their parents, or at least their father, had died; most urban maids were thus lower class, from rural areas, or orphans.³⁷ They found their positions through friends or relatives or, beginning in the fifteenth century, through employment agents who were licensed by the city and were most often women.³⁸ On noble estates, maids might actually be "forced servants" (*Zwangsgesinde*), performing at least a year of service as part of their family's feudal dues; one study of a Westphalian estate has found that this continued into the late eighteenth century and involved only the daughters of dependent families, never the sons.³⁹

Though service was praised because it put women into male-headed households, it was also problematic for that very reason. Increasing numbers of moralists and pamphleteers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries warned about the dangers of mixing classes within a household, and described maids as whores (*Huren*) who were out to seduce the head of

household or one of his sons, though in actuality the reverse was more often the case. (This stereotype would have dangerous consequences for maids who actually did become pregnant, a situation that was often disastrous and occasionally led to imprisonment or infanticide.)⁴⁰ They increasingly compared maids with animals such as apes, donkeys, or pigs, or described them as a subhuman group distinct from the rest of the population. An entire subgenre of the "devil's books" (*Teufelsbücher*), popular works that described the evils associated with various occupations or activities, focused on maids.⁴¹ The author of one of these, Philemon Menagius, for example, described maids as the "worst enemy," and viciously noted:

Maids must also consider what they are in and of themselves. They are in themselves nothing but ashes and dirt, and, however they want to deck themselves out, they are shadows and nothings. In stink (*Stank*) they were conceived, and in stink they lay hidden in their mothers' bodies. In stink they were born. They have nothing but filth and stink around them, and don't know to cover their stink, so that they don't often clear away the stink as the devil does, or their seams burst so that they cause a great stink and leave it after themselves.⁴²

Such sentiments, though extreme, were not limited to moral treatises, but also began to shape laws in the later sixteenth century. Maids were accused of causing the general inflation of the sixteenth century, and their wages were strictly limited. They were criticized for extravagance in clothing and forbidden to wear silk or satin, even if they had gotten this from a generous employer as a hand-me-down.⁴³ Those found to be acting in a "disobedient, contrary, untrue, or otherwise inappropriate manner" were to be harshly punished, as were those who were found guilty of idleness.⁴⁴ Even their speech was restricted; a 1580 Munich ordinance ordered "head-strong and defiant" maids punished if they spoke against their masters, and the Memmingen city council ordered maids and other women not to discuss religion when drawing water at the neighborhood wells.⁴⁵

Many of the regulations involving servants or the employment agents who found them positions were specifically concerned with limiting young women's mobility and independence. The 1580 Munich ordinance, for example, forbade anyone to coax servants away from their masters, not only with promises of gifts or money, but also with promises of "more freedom."⁴⁶ Many cities set draconian punishments for maids who left employers after serving less than six months or who demanded higher wages or gifts as conditions of employment; the frequency with which such laws were repeated suggests they were not as effective as authorities hoped,

however. Frequently changing employment was one of the sins charged to maids in the "devil's books," with numerous authors repeating the same saying: "One thinks highly of journeymen who have wandered, but absolutely nothing of maids who have done so."⁴⁷ It is difficult to know whether this was a real issue or simply part of the stereotype about maids, however, for death records often describe women who had been in service with the same family for thirty, forty, or fifty years, and women appealing to gain entry into city and church hospitals in their old age noted similar periods of service.⁴⁸

Despite the hostility towards maids and the restrictions on their independence, there were certain aspects of domestic service which made it attractive to young women. Though actual cash wages were low, room and board was included, allowing young women to save their wages for a dowry, spend them on clothing and jewelry, or even use them to make small investments or play city lotteries.⁴⁹ In some cities, maids who had worked a certain period with one employer were granted citizenship at a reduced rate, making them attractive marriage partners for husbands who were not citizens. In a few cities, public funds went to provide dowries for maids who had served long and honorably; though one would think the decades of service often required to gain such funds would have put a woman above marriageable age, the very late marriages recorded for many former maids demonstrates this was not always the case.

Domestic service also offered young women another means to gather a dowry: theft. Though servants who stole were harshly punished, the opportunities were great, and young women stole food, wine, bed-linens, spices, and money. They used these to trade for or buy drinks for their friends, or put them directly in their chests as a trousseau.⁵⁰ They bought gifts for young men they hoped to marry, or ribbons and lace collars for themselves. If caught, they sometimes justified their actions as simply taking back wages owed to them; a recent study of theft by maids has described this as both "retaliation and planning for the future."⁵¹

The pressure eventually to marry was not simply an ideological one for maids, but also reflected their understanding of what old age held for them if they did not. Though employers occasionally provided for servants who could no longer work, or servants used their own savings to buy places in hospitals or other care facilities, many were forced to move in with relatives and support themselves however they could.⁵² The eighteenth-century judge Karl von Eckhartshausen described one woman who had simply been given a letter of good conduct that attested "that she had worked for our

family as a children's maid for fifty years, and always conducted herself honorably, truly, and uprightly; she has been let go for no other reason other than that her eyes have gone bad so that she can no longer carry out her duties."⁵³ Aged ex-maids thus joined other singlewomen in the fluid pool of those who supported themselves by piecework, odd jobs, day laboring, and other forms of wage labor.

Wage Labor

Though wage labor has traditionally been seen as one of the hallmarks of capitalism, and thus a phenomenon of the "modern" economy, closer investigation of the medieval economy has indicated that many individuals, including many women, actually received wages at least as early as the fourteenth century, if not earlier. Estimates of urban populations in the eighteenth century note that one-quarter of the population may have supported themselves as day-laborers or by doing odd jobs, and, though accurate statistics are impossible, a good share of these were probably singlewomen. We know very little about how wage laborers were hired; certainly word of mouth and connections through relatives played a large part, and some cities appear to have had a corner of the public market where those seeking work gathered.

What types of work did women do? In the countryside they harvested grain, particularly in areas where grain was still cut with a sickle, or gathered and bound grain that men had cut with a scythe. Along with children, they gleaned, and they picked hops and grapes, sheared sheep, hauled manure, and harvested root crops. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, certain parts of Germany intensified stock-raising, with animals fed all year in stables instead of being allowed to range freely.⁵⁴ Feeding and caring for them was regarded as a female task, with women hired on a longer-term basis to care for pigs, cows, sheep, and poultry. In southern Germany and Switzerland, flax and linen production also provided employment for women in rural areas. We tend to think of the countryside as the domain of marital couples (and, indeed, the gender-specific nature of agricultural tasks meant that the proper functioning of a rural household necessitated at least one adult male and one adult female), but by the seventeenth century many rural areas actually offered more wage labor for women than men, and hiring records from large estates indicate that many of these may have been singlewomen.⁵⁵

The cities also offered a range of possibilities for wage labor. As we have seen, in areas with significant cloth production there was always spinning, although wages for this varied considerably; they may have been adequate at times in Augsburg, but in Frankfurt in 1613 a woman appealing to the city council for support noted "What little I make at spinning will not provide enough for even my bread."⁵⁶ By the late seventeenth century some cities in Germany had manufactories for spinning or other stages of cloth production, in which large numbers of young women were paid by the piece for their labor; these were often linked to public workhouses that people could enter of their own free will or be forced to enter after being arrested for begging.⁵⁷ Laundering was another possibility, for especially the heavy laundry like bedding and linens was generally done by professional laundresses rather than the women resident in a household. Most laundry was done outside the house along river banks in both winter and summer, or in special laundering huts that city governments occasionally suspected of being locations for prostitution as well.⁵⁸ Laundresses in some cities were regulated, and had to swear an oath they would not overcharge customers or dump refuse in the city's rivers.

Laundresses were not the only women whose employment necessitated swearing an oath. As urban hospitals, pesthouses, and orphanages secularized in the sixteenth century, large numbers of women found employment in these caring for the ill, aged, handicapped, and children. Though most cities attempted to find widows or married women for the higher administrative positions, they also hired dozens of maids, cooks, seamstresses, shepherdesses, and women simply labeled "assistants" who were, judging by the names in some hospital records, often singlewomen.⁵⁹ Like domestic servants, these women received low cash wages, with the majority of their pay coming as room and board. They swore oaths to follow regulations that were often spelled out in great detail, including stipulations that they attend church services, pray daily, and not stand in dark corners talking to young men.⁶⁰ During times of the plague cities often opened special plague-hospitals or pesthouses, hiring women, as in Augsburg in 1563, "for lifting, turning, and whatever they were needed for, including sewing the dead into their burial cloths. We also used them if the parents of children died — one was either sent to the children or the children were sent into their homes until they each had three children."⁶¹ Women were also hired by cities or privately to care for the needy outside of institutions; they took care of children, watched mentally ill adults, and fed war refugees. Though in times of great emergencies cities hired anyone avail-

able, in more peaceful times they were more restrictive; in 1532, for example, the Strasbourg city council paid people to care for the sick in their own homes and specifically wanted "elderly married men with good reputations and childless widows" for the job.⁶² Singlewomen need not apply.

Some of the jobs available for women involved the care of healthy bodies as well as ill ones. Public baths employed women to help people undress or hold their clothes, wash customers' hair and bodies, shave them, or beat them with switches to increase circulation. Such women were called "bath maids," and many of them were probably unmarried, although this term is not a clear description of their marital status. The man or woman who ran the bathhouse was generally ordered to avoid taking anyone on who was known to have been a prostitute — and the bathhouses themselves were often suspected of prostitution — but otherwise there were few restrictions on who could be hired in this rather low-status occupation.⁶³

Along with public baths, cities also ran municipal houses of prostitution from the fourteenth century until they were closed some time in the sixteenth century.⁶⁴ The man who ran a municipal brothel (*Frauenwirt*) was ordered not to take in young women from the city itself, but otherwise could take in anyone who looked to be healthy and clean. Most prostitutes came from poor families, and some appear to have been forced into prostitution by their parents or deceived into it through pimps or procurers.⁶⁵ Many more simply turned to prostitution when their attempts to support themselves in other ways failed, or combined prostitution with other types of wage labor such as laundering or spinning. (Indeed, in Ulm residents of the city's brothel were required to spin yarn every day for the *Frauenwirt* when they were not busy with customers, with the proceeds to go into a fund for women who were too old or sick to work.)⁶⁶ Women paid the *Frauenwirt* one-third of their earnings, and, though a few women may have earned fairly good pay at a young age, wills and inventories of prostitutes indicate that most earned very little.⁶⁷

During the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, prostitutes — or at least those who lived in municipal brothels — were integrated fairly well into urban society, appearing as a group at city festivals and publicly welcoming visiting dignitaries. During the late fifteenth century this situation began to change, for complex ideological and political reasons, with prostitutes increasingly marginalized and attempts made to distinguish prostitutes from other women through special clothing and restrictions on their movement and places of residence.⁶⁸ This process resulted in the closing of municipal brothels (a process that took decades, from 1520 to 1590), and it

also contributed to the hostility toward singlewomen. Singlewomen simply suspected of being "dishonorable" were ordered to move to special areas of cities reserved for prostitutes, "and not protect themselves that they do not carry out such sinful work in their houses."⁶⁹ In 1572 both Lucerne and Wismar ordered all young women not in service to leave, with the city council of Wismar noting that these women pretended to sew "in order to have a free life" but really "carried out great lewdness."⁷⁰ The borders between prostitution and other types of employment were often not rigid, as singlewomen (and also married women and widows) supported themselves occasionally by selling sex rather than, in the words of a woman from Stralsund in 1560, "suffer from poverty, hunger, and need."⁷¹ Early modern authorities, however, both Protestant and Catholic, attempted to make them rigid, and increasingly viewed all singlewomen as potential whores.⁷²

Craft Production and Sales

Though traditionally the Protestant and Catholic Reformations have been seen as the force behind the increased moralism of the sixteenth century, recent studies have pointed out that craft guilds also played a role in creating new types of familial and sexual ideology.⁷³ Certainly guild ordinances are one place where we can trace explicit restrictions on singlewomen, for, in contrast to what Bücher wished had been the case, access to craft guilds was only rarely the same for women as for men; the number of women working independently in guilds was always small, and most of these were master's widows.⁷⁴ The unmarried daughters of guild masters seem originally to have had the right to work in their father's shops as long as they remained unmarried, but this was not formally guaranteed through an apprenticeship contract, and by the seventeenth century was often disputed by journeymen. Daughters had to prove there were special circumstances that necessitated their working, and journeymen argued explicitly that masters' daughters should get married rather than take work away from men. Journeymen were even more adamant when it came to unrelated domestic servants, arguing that masters should utilize only apprentices and journeymen for production, and enforcing their aims by refusing to work next to men who had been trained in places where they still allowed "all sorts of servants, maids, women, and embroideresses."⁷⁵ Thus, though some singlewomen were employed in guild shops — occasionally even with the pretext

of being "adopted" by the master so to avoid the restriction on their work in production — this was not a path toward an independent mastership, but akin to domestic service.

In any city, and in the countryside, a huge range of items existed that no guild bothered to oversee which could be made or gathered, and then sold rather freely. Singlewomen, along with widows and poorer married women, often combined these with wage work as opportunities fluctuated throughout the year, making brooms, brushes, soap, sauerkraut, or candles during the winter months, gathering firewood or herbs in the spring and nuts, berries, fruit, or mushrooms in the summer, and harvesting grain or picking grapes in the fall. They sold hot food items they had made or used clothing and other items — for which there was a flourishing market — sometimes combining this with petty pawnbroking or moneylending.⁷⁶ For such sales they had a small stand at the market or carried their wares around house-to-house; the opportunities to deal in stolen merchandise were great, so cities often required used-goods dealers to register and swear an oath. From lists of those registered we can tell that at least some of these women were not married — that is, they are not identified as "so-and-so's wife" but as "so-and-so's daughter" or with their own name.⁷⁷

None of the women who sold at the market or peddled house-to-house became very wealthy, but the skills needed to earn at least a living through selling were those generally regarded as negative in women: verbal dexterity, independence, initiative, and a forceful personality. Market women appeared frequently in court defending their rights to sell certain items and their honesty and honor; they chased customers all over town to recover bad debts and took competitors to court to force them to stop selling.⁷⁸ Such skills and activities were bad enough, in the eyes of city authorities, in married women or widows, but even worse in singlewomen; a 1600 ordinance regulating fruit and vegetable vendors in Frankfurt, for example, blames "young female persons who could easily do some other kind of work, like being a maid" for "causing great disorder by selling fruit."⁷⁹ City officials often saw the license to sell or to have a stand as a substitute for poor relief, and wanted it limited to widows or married women whose husbands were away or injured. The Frankfurt ordinance noted above limits stands to those who are "aged and unsuitable for hard work, especially widows," and during the Thirty Years' War the city council of Strasbourg ordered all new brandy stands to go to widows or women whose husbands were away fighting "to support themselves better and live through this."⁸⁰

Other Occupations

The types of employment I have discussed so far — domestic service, wage labor, craft production, and sales — certainly absorbed the vast majority of singlewomen during the late medieval and early modern period. A few other options were available, but these tended to be limited to much smaller groups. By the late seventeenth century, noble and wealthy urban households often hired singlewomen as governesses to train their daughters, at first favoring women from France or French-speaking Switzerland for the all-important French lessons, but gradually taking on women from Germany as well.⁸¹

At the other end of the scale of respectability were women who attached themselves to soldiers or supported themselves through crime; the two were equivalent, in the eyes of authorities, who banned women known to associate with the armies so often encamped in Germany during this period.⁸² This suspicion of "soldiers' whores" at times extended to all singlewomen; in 1684 the Strasbourg city council ordered all singlewomen staying in the city who were not domestic servants to be registered "because so many immoral and indecent female persons have crept into the city and upset honorable citizens with their scandalous and animal-like lifestyles and have created noticeable problems among the king's garrison stationed here."⁸³ As in the case of maids and their employers, soldiers actually created more problems for women who associated with them than the reverse; by the eighteenth century in Prussia, soldiers were generally not liable to appear before local courts in fornication or paternity suits, and a significant share of the women who appeared before such courts alone described their impregnator as a soldier. Soldiers were forbidden to marry without the approval of their commanding officer, and sometimes made up the majority of unmarried men living in any area. This situation has led Ulrike Gleixner to note that in eighteenth-century Prussia "to a great degree the military system structured the sexual relationships between unmarried women and men."⁸⁴

Conclusions

Whether servant, spinner, or "soldier's whore," singlewomen in Germany were often regarded as both animals and seductresses, living in filth and

tempting men. They joined widows as an intellectual and moral problem for church and state authorities, inescapable given demographic and economic realities, but clearly outside the ideal that saw male-headed households as the only acceptable building blocks of society. Restrictions on their dress and employment, on the words they could speak, places they could go, and people they could talk to increased throughout the period, and a mistake in any of these could lead to suspicion of immorality, which further restricted their opportunities, or even to pregnancy, which could be catastrophic.

We might choose, as some historians have, to end the story here, with an assertion of the "bleak" conditions of life for singlewomen, the fact that "outside the family and the allotted roles of daughter, wife, and mother, women existed against considerable odds."⁸⁵ We might, however, read the sources slightly differently, not forgetting the restrictions, but also noticing how often they were ignored, laughed at, or directly confronted. Maids stole beer to drink with their friends, gathered at wells to discuss religion, or used their small earnings to buy jewelry and lace or play city lotteries; lacemakers ordered wine from taverns to drink while they worked and visited taverns or played cards openly when they were through for the day; used-goods dealers defended their livelihood and their honor when accused of trafficking in stolen goods or shortchanging their customers; spinners chose to keep "having their own smoke," living on their own or with other spinners despite all efforts to force them into male-headed households. These are, perhaps, small freedoms, but they indicate that, despite all the efforts of moralists and authorities, singlewomen did not always internalize the standard view of their condition or their character, nor did they necessarily require the support of their family to survive.⁸⁶

Women's actions are only rarely accompanied by the type of self-conscious reflection we, as feminist historians, always hope to find. One of the few of these comes from the pen of Anna Bijns — actually a Dutch woman, not a German — who supported herself by teaching school and writing anti-Lutheran poetry. Though the hopes of most singlewomen rested with eventual marriage, her words indicate that at least a few women had a different opinion:

How good to be a woman, how much better to be a man!
Maidens and wenches, remember the lesson you're about to hear
Don't hurdle yourself into marriage far too soon . . .
Though wedlock I do not decry;
I invoked is best! happy the woman without a man!⁸⁷

This essay was written while I held the Association of Marquette University Women (AMUW) Chair in Humanistic Studies; my thanks to AMUW for providing me with the time to work on this and other writing projects. My thanks also to Susan Karant-Nunn for her suggestions about sources and references.

Notes

1. Karl Bücher, *Die Frauenfrage im Mittelalter* (Tübingen: H. Laupp, 1882).
2. Karl Bücher, *Die Berufe der Stadt Frankfurt im Mittelalter* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1914); Karl Weinhold, *Die deutschen Frauen in dem Mittelalter*, 2 vols. (Vienna: Gerold, 1851).
3. Kurt Wesoly, "Der weiblichen Bevölkerungsanteil im spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Städten und die Betätigung von Frauen in zünftigen Handwerk (insbesondere am Mittel- und Oberrhein)," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 89 (1980): 69–117.
4. Merry E. Wiesner, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 4. (Specific archival references may be found in the notes of this book and for brevity's sake have not been reproduced here unless they concern a direct quotation.) Peter Ketsch, *Frauen im Mittelalter*, vol. 1, *Frauen im Mittelalter; Quellen und Materialien* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1983), 34–36.
5. Annette Winter, "Studien zur sozialen Situation der Frauen in der Stadt Trier nach der Steuerliste von 1364," *Kurtrierisches Jahrbuch* 15 (1975): 20–45.
6. Though he does not extend his own study into the period after 1500, when Bücher found increasing restrictions on women's work in the guilds in the late fifteenth century he asserted that there must have been "a gradual leveling of the significant sexual imbalance evident in the Middle Ages," for otherwise such "narrow-minded exclusion" would certainly have created "strong opposition in society and disturbance of the public order." As his own findings indicate a steady increase in the percentage of female taxpayers throughout the fifteenth century, his only solution was to propose a dramatic change, leading him to the odd claim that the sixteenth century was "peaceful times" (Bücher, *Frauenfrage*, 16).
7. Gerd Wunder, *Die Stuttgarter Steuerliste von 1545*, Veröffentlichung des Archivs der Stadt Stuttgart 26 (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1974).
8. Friedrich Bothe, *Die Entwicklung der direkten Besteuerung in der Reichsstadt Frankfurt* (Leipzig: Duncker und Humboldt, 1906); Claus-Peter Clasen, *Die Augsburger Steuerbücher um 1600* (Augsburg: Hieronymus Muhlberger, 1976). Clasen attempts to sort out individual female taxpayers' marital status exactly, and notes that some women are explicitly labeled "single" (*ledig*), but because others are listed simply by name with no marital status, he is not able to do this in every case and his numbers are approximations.
9. Arno Fitz, *Familie und Frühindustrialisierung in Vöhring* (Dornbirn: Gütersloh, 1985), 110.
10. Heide Wunder, "Er ist die Sonn', sie ist der Mond": Frauen in der Frühen

Neuzeit (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992), 48–49; Lotte C. van de Pol, "The Lure of the Big City: Female Migration to Amsterdam," in *Women of the Golden Age: An International Debate on Women in Seventeenth-Century Holland, England, and Italy*, ed. Els Klock, Nicole Teuwen, and Marijke Huisman (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), 79. Though much of the discussion about the role of social class in determining age at first marriage is rather impressionistic and anecdotal, Renate Dürr has used unusually comprehensive death registers (*Totenbücher*) from Schwäbisch-Hall during the period 1635–90 to determine that over half the women who had previously worked as domestic servants did not marry until they were 30 or older (and 10 percent when they were 40 or older!), in contrast to only 12 percent of the women who had not worked as servants (Renate Dürr, *Mägde in der Stadt: Das Beispiel Schwäbisch Hall in der Frühen Neuzeit* [Frankfurt: Campus, 1995], 175). Jürgen Schlumbohm also has very complete records from a small rural area for the period 1650–1750 that indicate that not only familial wealth, but also whether one was an heir had significant effects on age at first marriage for both women and men (Jürgen Schlumbohm, *Lebensläufe. Familien, Höfe: Die Bauern und Heuerleute des Osnabrückischen Kirchspiels Behm in proto-industrieller Zeit, 1650–1850* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1994], 100).

11. Ketsch, *Frauen*, 51, 97; Dürr, *Mägde*, 19; Erich Maschke, *Gesellschaftliche Unterschichten in den südwestdeutschen Städten* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1967), 29.
12. Arthur E. Imhof, *Lebenserwartungen in Deutschland vom 17. bis 19. Jahrhundert* (Weinheim: VCH, 1990).
13. In Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Memmingen, and Schwäbisch-Hall, 30 to 60 percent of the female-headed households in the sixteenth century were valued in the lowest category, and often identified as "have-nothings" (*Habenichtsen*) (Wiesner, *Working Women*, 5; Ketsch, *Frauen*, 40–45). In Wismar in 1475, 26 percent of the households listed as living in cellars or rooms (rather than houses) were women, most just listed by first name or termed "daughter" (Maschke, *Unterschichten*, 27).
14. James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 474–76, 568; Marc Forster, "The Counter-Reformation and the Traditional Church in the Villages of Speyer," *Fides et Historia* 2 (1989): 30–37; Wilhelm Kohl, "Die Durchsetzung der tridentischen Reformen im Domkapital zu Münster," in *Reformatio Ecclesiae: Beiträge zu kirchlichen Reformbemühungen von dem Alten Kirche bis zur Neuzeit*, ed. Remigius Bäumer (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1980), 729–47; Ulrike Strasser, "Forewell My Concubine: The Criminalization of Clerical Marriage in Counter-Reformation Munich," unpublished paper.
15. Robert Jütte, "Dutzbetterinnen und Sündfegerinnen: Kriminelle Bettelpraktiken von Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Von Huren und Rabenmüttern: weibliche Kriminalität in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Otto Ulbricht (Cologne: Böhlau, 1995), 117–38; Helfried Valentini, "Frauen unterwegs. Eine Fallstudie zur Mobilität von Frauen in der Steiermark um 1700," in *Weiber, Menschen, Frauenzimmer: Frauen in der ländlichen Gesellschaft 1500–1800*, ed. Heide Wunder and Christina Vanja (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1996), 223–36.
16. Ute Braun, "Frauentestamente: Stiftsdamen, Fürstinnen-Abtissinnen und ihre Schwestern in Selbstzeugnissen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts," *Beiträge zur Geschichte von Stadt und Stift Essen* 104 (1991/92): 13–99.

17. For translations of some of these writings, see Merry E. Wiesner and Joan Skocir, *Convents Confront the Reformation: Catholic and Protestant Nuns in Germany* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press), esp. 67–77.
18. Lyndal Roper, "Going to Church and Street: Weddings in Reformation Augsburg," *Past and Present* 106 (1985): 62–101.
19. Brundage, *Law, Sex, 564*.
20. Joel Harrington, *Rereading Marriage and Society in Reformation Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Thomas Robisheaux, *Rural Society and the Search for Order in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 95–120.
21. Wunder, *Er ist die Sonne*, 89–118; Margo Todd, "Humanists, Puritans, and the Spiritualized Household," *Church History* 49 (1980): 18–34.
22. For discussion of convent life during this period, see many of the essays in Sherrin Marshall, ed., *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe: Public and Private Worlds* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).
23. On this point, see Harrington, *Rereading*, 59–83; Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "Kinder, Küche, Kirche: Social Ideology in the Sermons of Johannes Mathesius," in *Germania Illustrata: Essays on Early Modern Germany Presented to Gerald Strauss*, ed. Andrew C. Fix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirkville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992), 121–40.
24. Merry E. Wiesner, "Wandervögel and Women: Journeymen's Concepts of Masculinity in Early Modern Germany," *Journal of Social History* 24 (1991): 767–82; Lyndal Roper, "Was There a Crisis in Gender Relations in Sixteenth-Century Germany?" and "Blood and Codpieces: Masculinity in the Early Modern German Town," both in her *Ordinary and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), 37–52, 107–24.
25. Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), esp. 146–50; Robert W. Scribner, "Mobility, Voluntary or Enforced: Vagrants in Württemberg in the Sixteenth Century," in *Migration in der Feudalgesellschaft*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz and Albert Müller (Frankfurt: Ludwig-Boltzmann Institut, 1988), 65–88; Franz Irzinger and Arnold Lasotta, *Bettler und Gaukler, Dirnen und Henker: Außenseiter in einer mittelalterlichen Stadt* (Cologne: Greven Verlag, 1984); Bernd Roxck, *Außenseiter, Randgruppen, Minderheiten: Fremde im Deutschland der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1993). Beata Schuster has noted that this hostility toward migrants was part of what she terms a "morality of settledness" (*Moral der Sesshaftigkeit*) that also shaped treatment of prostitutes, who were usually migrants (Beata Schuster, *Die freien Frauen: Dirnen und Frauenhäuser im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* [Frankfurt: Campus, 1995], 419).
26. Wiesner, *Working Women*, 6.
27. The quotations are from the Memmingen Stadtarchiv, Ratsprotokollbücher, June 12, 1612 and the Munich Stadtarchiv, Ratsitzungsprotokoll, 1607, fol. 238. A similar ordinance against "self-supporting maidens" was passed in Malmo, Denmark in 1549 and was part of the English Statute of Artificers in 1563 (Grethe

- Jacobsen, "Nordic Women and the Reformation," in Marshall, *Women*, 56; Mary Prior, "Freedom and Autonomy in England and the Netherlands," in *Women*, ed. Klock et al., 138).
28. Strasbourg, Archives Municipales, Statuten, vol. 33, no. 61 (1665), my translation. Poor parents in Essex were also ordered to send all children over the age of fifteen into service if they wanted to receive poor relief, with parishes often sending pauper girls to London (Pamela Sharpe, *Adapting to Capitalism: Working Women in the English Economy 1700–1850* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996]).
29. Claus-Peter Clasen, *Die Augsburger Weber: Leistungen und Krisen des Textilgewerbes um 1600* (Augsburg: Muhlberger, 1981), 133–34.
30. Sheila Ogilvie, "Women and Proto-industrialization in a Corporate Society: Württemberg Woollen Weaving, 1590–1760," in *Women's Work and the Family Economy in Historical Perspective*, ed. Pat Hudson and W. R. Lee (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 86–92.
31. Johann Georg Krünitz, *Das Gesindewesen nach Grundsätzen der Oekonomie und Polizeiwissenschaft abgehandelt* (Berlin, 1779), reprinted in Andrea van Dülmen, ed., *Frauenleben im 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992), 327, my translation.
32. Quoted in Arno Fitz, "Heimarbeit und Selbstbewußtsein von Vorarlberger Frauen im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Weiber, Menschen, Frauenzimmer*, ed. Wunder and Vanja, 67, my translation.
33. Thomas Max Safley, *Let No Man Put Asunder: The Control of Marriage in the German Southwest: A Comparative Study, 1550–1600* (Kirkville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1984). This was also true in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania: see Merrill D. Smith, *Breaking the Bonds: Marital Discord in Pennsylvania, 1730–1810* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1991).
34. Olwen Hufton, "Women, Work, and Marriage in Eighteenth-Century France," *Studies in the Social History of Marriage*, ed. R. B. Outhwaite (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 189.
35. Ketsch, *Frauen*, 58–67; Dürr, *Mägde*, 151.
36. Michael Mitterauer, "Gesindedienst und Jugendphase im europäischen Vergleich," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 11 (1985): 177–204.
37. Dürr, *Mägde*, 30; see also several of the essays in Gert Hardt, Frühworte, Rainer Gruenter, and Beatrix Freifrau Wolff, eds., *Gesinde im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1995).
38. For a fuller discussion of employment agents, see Wiesner, *Working Women*, 83–85.
39. Wingolf Lehnemann, "Knechte und Mägde auf einem westfälischen Adelshof im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Wandel der Volkskultur in Europa*, ed. Nils-Arvid Bringius et al. (Münster: F. Copenrath, 1988), 2: 700–24.
40. Dürr, *Mägde*, 220–65; Ulrika Rublack, "Women and Crime in Southwest Germany, 1500–1700" (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1994), 153–78; Richard von Dülmen, *Frauen vor Gericht: Kindermord in der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1991); Susan Karant-Nunn, "The Rape of Servingmaids, Shameful Talk, and the Electress's Purity: Moral and Class Boundaries in an Age of Confessionalization and Social Disciplining" (unpublished paper).

41. Dürr, *Mägde*, 76–99. See also Paul Münch, "Tiere, Teufel oder Menschen? Zur gesellschaftlichen Einschätzung der 'dienenden Klassen' während der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Gesinde*, ed. Frösorge et al. 83–108.
42. Philemon Menagius, *Die Sieben Teuffel / welche fast in der ganzen Welt die heutige Dienst-Mägde beherrschen und verführen* . . . (Frankfurt, 1693), 66–67, my translation. Frances E. Dolan has discussed early modern literary portrayals of servants as "enemies within" in *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England 1550–1700* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994).
43. Wiesner, *Working Women*, 87–88.
44. Strasbourg, Archives Municipales, Statuten, vol. 18, fol. 30. There is a good discussion of visual representations of idle maids in Wayne E. Franits, *Paradoxes of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 108–10.
45. Munich, Stadtarchiv, Gewerbeamt, no. 1569 (1580); Barbara Kroemer, "Die Einführung der Reformation in Memmingen," *Memminger Geschichtsblätter*, 1980: 11–23.
46. Munich, Stadtarchiv, Gewerbeamt, no. 1569 (1580).
47. This phrase was in one of the very popular "devil's books" about servants: Johann Balhasar Schupp, *Sieben böse Geister Welche heutiges Tages Knechte und Mägde regieren und verführen* (Hamburg, 1659), quoted in Dürr, *Mägde*, 210, and in an earlier, more general, anonymous devil's book, *Theatrum Diabolorum. Das ist: Warhafftige, eigentliche und kurzze Beschreibung allerley grewlicher, schreckliche und abscheulicher Laster* . . . (Frankfurt, 1575), quoted in Wiesoly, "Weibliche," 77.
48. Dürr, *Mägde*, 178, 210–12; Wiesner, *Working Women*, 83.
49. Wiesner, *Working Women*, 91; Marybeth Carlson, "A Trojan Horse of Worldliness: Maidservants in the Burgher Household in Rotterdam at the End of the Seventeenth Century," in Kloek, *Women*, 95.
50. Rublack, "Women," 89–97.
51. Otto Ulbricht, "Zwischen Vergeltung und Zukunftsplanung: Hausdiebstahl von Mägde in Schleswig-Holstein vom 16. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert," in *Von Huren und Rabenmüttern: Weibliche Kriminalität in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Ulbricht (Cologne: Böhlau, 1995), 139–71.
52. Dürr, *Mägde*, 176–80.
53. Karl von Eckhardtshausen, *Tagebuch eines Richters oder Beiträge zur Geschichte des menschlichen Elendes* (Munich, 1789), 104, quoted in Dürr, *Frauenleben*, 331, my translation.
54. Wunder, *Er ist die Sonn'*, 90–95; David Warren Sabean, *Property, Production and Family in Neucharhausen, 1700–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 148–49; Christina Vanja, "Frauen im Dorf: Ihre Stellung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung langgräflicher Quellen im Mittelalter," *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 34 (1986): 147–59.
55. Dorothea Rippman, "Frauenarbeit im Wandel: Arbeitsteilung, Arbeitsorganisation und Entlohnung im Weinbau am Oberrhein (15./16. Jahrhundert)," in *Weiber*, ed. Wunder and Vanja, 26–59; Wunder, *Er ist die Sonn'*, 93–94.
56. Frankfurt, Stadtarchiv, Zünfte, Ugb. C-50, 88, no. 4 (1615).
57. Rita Bake, *Vorindustrielle Frauenerwerbsarbeit: Arbeits- und Lebensweise von*

- Manufakturarbeitern im Deutschland des 18. Jhds. unter besondere Berücksichtigung Hamburgs* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1984). This was also true in England, where poor law authorities organized spinstries and expected poor singlewomen to work there (Pamela Sharpe, "Literally Spinsters: A New Interpretation of Local Economy and Demography in Colyton in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Economic History Review* 34 (1991): 46–65).
58. Wiesner, *Working Women*, 94.
59. Munich, Stadtarchiv, Heilig-Geist-Spital, no. 275, Pfundner und Person-alverzeichnis 1573–1598. In a few institutions, remaining unmarried was a condition of employment (Rublack, "Women," 98).
60. Wiesner, *Working Women*, 38–41.
61. Augsburg Stadtarchiv, Collegium Medicum, fasc. 5.
62. Wiesner, *Working Women*, 49.
63. Wiesner, *Working Women*, 74, 95–97.
64. Peter Schuster, *Das Frauenhaus: Städtische Bordelle in Deutschland 1350 bis 1600* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1992).
65. P. Schuster, *Frauenhaus*, 77–85; B. Schuster, *Freien Frauen*, 194–204.
66. Georg Krieger, *Deutsches Bürgerthum im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt: Rütten und Loening, 1871), 2: 316.
67. B. Schuster, *Freien Frauen*, 200–205; P. Schuster, *Frauenhaus*, 96–98.
68. This process has been traced in Wiesner, *Working Women*, 97–106; Lyndal Roper, "Discipline and Respectability: Prostitution and Reformation in Augsburg," *History Workshop Journal* 19 (1985): 3–28; P. Schuster, *Frauenhaus*. The most extensive discussion is B. Schuster, *Freien Frauen*, which also has a 55-page bibliography.
69. Strasbourg, Archives municipales, Statuten, vol. 2 fol. 137 (1497).
70. Quoted in B. Schuster, *Freien Frauen*, 399.
71. *Ibid.*, 200.
72. Some authors have pointed out that not simply singlewomen, but *all* women came to be considered potential whores as marriage was also sexualized during this period, in a complex process that involved the Protestant and Catholic Reformations but did not start with them. See B. Schuster, *Freien Frauen*, esp. 224–55, 403–19; and Roper, *Holy Household*.
73. See Wunder, *Er ist die Sonn'*, 58–65; B. Schuster, *Freien Frauen*, 322–41; Merry Wiesner, "Guilds, Male Bonding and Women's Work in Early Modern Germany," *Gender and History* 1 (1989): 125–37.
74. I have traced the debate about women working in the guilds in "Gender and the Worlds of Work," in *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, vol. 1, ed. Sheila Ogilvie and Robert Scribner (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), 221.
75. Frankfurt, Stadtarchiv, Zünfte, Ugb. C-36, Cc (1649, Huter).
76. Wiesner, *Working Women*, 123–37.
77. Munich, Stadtarchiv, Gewerbeamt, no. 5170; Strasbourg, Archives Municipales, Statuten, vol. 30, fol. 136 (1400). Nuremberg, Stadtarchiv, Aemterbuchlein, 1–81 (1400–1562). The Strasbourg list is interesting for the variety of ways in which women's names appear at this point in which surnames have not solidified. Some are listed as "(male name)'s daughter" or as "(male name)'s wife," while others have a first name and surname, a first name and place of origin or residence,

or a first name and identifying characteristic. From this we can probably assume that some of the women were not married, although we cannot be sure of exactly how many. The same is true of the earliest Nuremberg lists that show a variety of name forms; by 1480, however, the women are all listed simply with their own given name and surname, with no indication of marital status. Andrzej Karpinski has also found that more than half the female traders in the marketplace of Cracow were unmarried, though he cautions that the exact proportion of widows and singlewomen among this group is impossible to determine ("The Woman on the Market Place: The Scale of Feminization of Retail Trade in Polish Towns in the Second Half of the 16th and in the 17th Centuries," in *La Donna nell'Economia Sec. XIII-XVIII*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi, Serie II, Atti delle "Settimane di Studi" e altri Convegni, 21 [Prato, Italy: Istituto International de Storia Economica "F. Datini," 1990], 283-92).

78. For a fuller discussion of market women, see Wiesner, *Working Women*, 134-42.

79. Frankfurt, Stadtarchiv, Verordnungen, vol. 1, no. 107, 1616 and 1690 Obsthocken Ordnung.

80. Strasbourg, Archives Municipales, Akten der XV, 1636, fol. 167.

81. Irene Hardach-Pinke, *Die Gouvernante: Geschichte eines Frauenberufs* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1993).

82. Ulrika Rublack, "Metze und Magd: Frauen, Krieg und die Bildfunktion des Weiblichen in deutschen Städten der frühen Neuzeit," in *Historische Anthropologie*, ed. Rolf Lindner and Norbert Schindler (Cologne: Böhlau, 1995), 412-32.

83. Strasbourg, Archives Municipales, Statuten, vol. 33, fol. 26b (1684).

84. Ulrike Gleixner, "Das Mensch" und "der Kerl": *Die Konstruktion von Geschlecht in Unzuchtverfahren der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1994), 106.

85. Olwen Hufton, "Women, Work, and Family," in *A History of Women in the West*, ed. Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge, Vol. 3, *Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradigms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 45.

86. This point has also been made by Sharpe, "Literally Spinsters," 62; Rublack, "Women and Crime," 213-17; and Fitz, "Heimarbeit," 73.

87. Anna Bijns, "Unyoked is best!" trans. Kristiaan P. G. Aertske, reprinted in *Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Katharina M. Wilson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 382.